

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions, and listings of the claims in the application:

Claims 1-41 (Cancelled).

42. (Previously Presented) A pressure support system comprising:
pressure generating means for generating a flow of breathing gas;
controlling means for controlling the operation of the pressure generating means;
housing means for housing the pressure generating means and the controlling
means;
receiving means associated with the housing means for receiving an information
storing means;
information storing means for storing information adapted to be disposed in the
receiving means;
communicating means for communicating information in at least one of (1) a first
direction from the information storing means to the controlling means and (2) a second direction
from the controlling means to the information storing means responsive to the information
storing means being disposed in the receiving means; and
adapter means, sized and configured to be received, at least partially, within the
receiving means, for providing a communication link between the controlling means and an
external device responsive to the adapter means being disposed in the receiving means.

Claims 43-49. (Cancelled).

50. (Previously Presented) A pressure support system comprising:

(a) a pressure support device comprising:

(1) a housing,

(2) a pressure generating system disposed within the housing for generating a flow of breathing gas,

(3) a controller disposed within the housing in communication with the pressure generating system that controls the operation of the pressure generating system,

(4) a slot defined in an exterior surface of the housing, and

(5) a terminal associated with the slot;

(b) an information storage device adapted to be selectively disposed in the slot, the information storage device comprising:

(1) an identification storage area adapted to contain information identifying at least one of (i) information describing the information storage device itself, (ii) information identifying a user to which the information storage device is assigned, and (iii) information identifying the pressure support device assigned for use with the information storage device,

(2) at least one of (i) a first information storage area adapted to contain information for use in controlling an operation of the pressure support device, and (ii) a data storage area adapted to store data written thereon by the pressure support device, wherein the controller communicates with the information storage device via the terminal responsive to the information storage device being disposed in the slot, and wherein the controller is adapted to at least one of (1) read information from the information storage device, and (2) write information to the information storage device via the terminal; and

(c) an adapter adapted to be selectively disposed in the slot, wherein the adapter provides communication access between the controller and an external device responsive to being inserted into the slot.

51. (Previously Presented) A pressure support system comprising:

(a) a pressure support device comprising:

(1) a housing,

(2) a blower disposed within the housing for generating a flow of gas,

(3) a gas outlet provided on the housing, wherein the flow of gas generated by the blower is communicated to the gas outlet,

(4) a controller disposed within the housing in communication with the blower, wherein the controller causes the pressure support device to deliver a prescription pressure to an airway of a patient by controlling an operating speed of the blower,

(5) a usage monitor that monitors an amount of time that the pressure support device has been used,

(6) a display provided on an exterior surface of the housing, and

(7) a slot associated with an exterior surface of the housing;

(b) a patient circuit having a proximal end selectively coupled to the gas outlet of the housing and a distal end, wherein the patient circuit carries the flow of gas from the pressure support device;

(c) a mask selectively coupled to the distal end of the patient circuit adapted to communicate the flow of gas with an airway of the patient;

(d) an exhaust port defined in the patient circuit, the mask, or both, wherein the exhaust port has a size that remains substantially fixed despite pressure fluctuations in the mask, the patient circuit, or both; and

(e) an information storage card adapted to be inserted into the slot, wherein the amount of time that the pressure support device has been used is downloaded to the information storage card responsive to the card being inserted into the slot.

52. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 51, wherein the information storage card includes a new prescription pressure, wherein the new prescription pressure is downloaded from the information storage card to the controller responsive to the card being inserted into the slot.

53. (Previously Presented) A method of providing pressure support to a patient and for providing usage information to a remote location, comprising:

(a) generating a flow of gas for delivery to a patient at a pressure greater than ambient pressure via a pressure support device comprising:

- (i) a housing,
- (ii) a blower disposed within the housing for generating the flow of gas,
- (iii) a gas outlet provided on the housing, wherein the flow of gas generated by the blower is communicated to the gas outlet,
- (iv) a controller disposed within the housing in communication with the blower to control an operating speed of the blower,
- (v) a usage monitor that monitors an amount of time that the pressure support device has been used,
- (vi) a display provided on an exterior surface of the housing, and
- (vii) a slot associated with an exterior surface of the housing;

(b) carrying the flow of gas from the pressure support device to a patient by means of a patient circuit having a proximal end selectively coupled to the gas outlet of the housing and a distal end;

(c) communicating the flow of gas an airway of the patient by means of a mask selectively coupled to the distal end of the patient circuit and donned by the patient;

(d) exhausting at least a portion of the flow of gas via an exhaust port defined in the patient circuit, the mask, or both, wherein the exhaust port has a size that remains substantially fixed despite pressure fluctuations in the mask, the patient circuit, or both;

(e) monitoring the amount of time that the pressure support device has been used via the usage monitor;

(f) inserting an information storage card into the slot;

(g) downloading the amount of time that the pressure support device has been used is downloaded to the information storage card responsive to the card being inserted into the slot;

(h) placing the card in an envelope;

(i) mailing the card to the remote location; and

(j) reading amount of time that the pressure support device has been used from the card.

54. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 53, further comprising:
providing a new prescription pressure on the information storage card;
inserting the information storage card into the slot;
downloading the new prescription pressure from the information storage card to the controller responsive to the card being inserted into the slot; and
causing the pressure support device to deliver the flow of gas at the new pressure.

55. (Previously Presented) A pressure support system comprising:
(a) a pressure support device comprising:
 (1) a housing,
 (2) a blower disposed within the housing for generating a flow of gas,
 (3) a gas outlet provided on the housing, wherein the flow of gas generated by the blower is communicated to the gas outlet,
 (4) a controller disposed within the housing in communication with the blower, wherein the controller causes the pressure support device to deliver a prescription pressure to an airway of a patient by controlling an operating speed of the blower,
 (5) a display provided on an exterior surface of the housing, and

- (6) a slot associated with an exterior surface of the housing;
- (b) a patient circuit having a proximal end selectively coupled to the gas outlet of the housing and a distal end, wherein the patient circuit carries the flow of gas from the pressure support device;
- (c) a mask selectively coupled to the distal end of the patient circuit adapted to communicate the flow of gas with an airway of the patient;
- (d) an exhaust port defined in the patient circuit, the mask, or both, wherein the exhaust port has a size that remains substantially fixed despite pressure fluctuations in the mask, the patient circuit, or both; and
- (e) an information storage card adapted to be inserted into the slot, wherein the information storage card includes a new prescription pressure, and wherein the new prescription pressure is downloaded from the information storage card to the controller responsive to the card being inserted into the slot.

56. (Currently Amended) A method of providing pressure support to a patient and for providing a new prescription pressure to a patient, comprising:

- (a) generating a flow of gas for delivery to a patient at a pressure greater than ambient pressure via a pressure support device comprising:
 - (i) a housing,
 - (ii) a blower disposed within the housing for generating the flow of gas,
 - (iii) a gas outlet provided on the housing, wherein the flow of gas generated by the blower is communicated to the gas outlet,
 - (iv) a controller disposed within the housing in communication with the blower to control an operating speed of the blower,
 - (v) a display provided on an exterior surface of the housing, and
 - (vi) a slot associated with an exterior surface of the housing;

(b) carrying the flow of gas from the pressure support device to a patient by means of a patient circuit having a proximal end selectively coupled to the gas outlet of the housing and a distal end;

(c) communicating the flow of gas an airway of the patient by means of a mask selectively coupled to the distal end of the patient circuit and donned by the patient;

(d) exhausting at least a portion of the flow of gas via an exhaust port defined in the patient circuit, the mask, or both, wherein the exhaust port has a size that remains substantially fixed despite pressure fluctuations in the mask, the patient circuit, or both;

(e) storing a new prescription pressure in an information storage card at a remote location;

(f) placing the card in an envelope;

(h) mailing the card to the user;

(i) inserting an information storage card into the slot; and

(j) downloading the new prescription pressure from the information storage card to the controller responsive to the card being inserted into the slot.